

Educational.

LIBRARIES.

[BY J. FRED. REED, WASHINGTON, D. C.]

Among other good things which we find in the able Report of the Commissioner of Education at Washington, Hon. John Eaton, we call this week something respecting Libraries. The statistics are elaborate and suggestive. Every year shows a great advance in the library interest. New Libraries are being established, and great accessions of books are reported to all.

We are especially interested in remarks connected with the dedication of the Concord Free Library, a gift of Mr. Monroe, from which we make the following extracts:

It may not be generally known, and it may interest this audience to know, how early Concord stands among New England towns as the owner of a town-library. I do not refer to the establishment of the present library in 1851, though that was early among the towns. Our library is much greater, and goes back at least two hundred years. If any other town or city can claim precedence of us, they are invited to show their title. In 1872, a committee, consisting of ten citizens, was chosen to give instructions to the selection, and of the seventeen articles which they prepared the third read as follows:

"That care be taken of the books of masters, and other books, that belong to the Town, that they be kept from abusive usage, and not to be lent to persons more than one month at one time."

It only remains for me, in the name and behalf of the town and its inhabitants, to give some slight expression of their respect and gratitude to their benefactor. We thank you, sir, not only for the magnitude of the gift in its pecuniary value, but for the wise and thoughtful spirit which planned the benefaction and has watched over every detail of its completion. You have given to your native town something which shall make it henceforth a town better worth living in. We are glad to think that this is an expression of kind feeling and regard to us, the inhabitants of Concord, that feel the want of personal acquaintance in our welfare. In that touching story of the olden time, when the sides of the people went to invoke the Master's aid for the centurion, the affectionate phrase of their intercession was that "he is worthy, for we lovesth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue." But we recognize in your bounty not merely kindness to your friends and neighbors, to the generation which you know and by which you are known, but something fruitful and perennial. We are passing away with you; but the town, this Concord which we love, is to live on and for an indefinite future to be elevated and enriched by means of what you have done. It is enriched, indeed, by your example. To do something for the permanent benefit of mankind is the purest, as it is the highest, object of human ambition.

Ralph Waldo Emerson, Esq., followed with characteristic remarks, from which extracts are given:

That town is attractive to the native citizens and to immigrants which has a healthy site, good land, well-constructed sidewalks, and good hotels. More attractive is it that it has a fine town hall, good church, good teachers, good schools, but still more if it has welled itself out of the hands of the legislature authorizing towns to tax themselves for the support of public libraries; happier yet if it has citizens who can't wait for the slow growth of the town to make this adequate to the desire of the people, but best of all, as is the act which we have met to witness and acknowledge to-day. I think we cannot easily esteem the benefit conferred in this, as I foresee, great benefit from it to this noble town. We have a splendid library, which will make readers of those who are not readers, scholars of those who do not study. \* \* \* If you consider what has befallen you when reading a poem, a history, or a novel even—how you forgot the time of day, the person sitting in the room with you, your engagements for the evening—you will easily admit that books make all towns equal. With Concord a library makes it as good as London, Paris, or Rome. Robinson Crusoe, if he had a shelf of books, could easily have dispensed with even his man Friday. Every faculty casts itself into an art, and memory into writing—that is into books. The plant physics, which gave the name to paper, is of more importance in history than silver or gold. It first uses for writing is between the sixth and four thousand years."

\* \* \* I know of no work "of literature" has in many cases a hollow sound. It is thought to be the entertainment of a few fanciful persons—not to be of and for the multitude. But this comes from those who think everything is useless that cannot in some way add to their physical comforts. There are utilitarians who prefer that Jesus should have wrought as a carpenter and Paul as a tent-maker.

Books are a record of the best thought. The river of thought is constantly running from the invisible world into the minds of men. Such was the physical custom of the ancient priests of Mexico to obtain fire and distribute it to every hearth in the nation. The influence of a book may extend to those who have never seen it. Shakespeare and Milton and Pindar have, through others, affected the minds of men who never heard of them. What they have in them cannot be contained in a cup; it runs over into all the minds that will have it. Consider that it is our own state of mind in time that makes our own estimate of life and the world. If you sprain your foot, you will think that nature has sprained hers; and so when you sprain your mind you have a bad opinion of life. If you can kindle imagination, go no more, because more active. Music does this for some, and for others, and a good book will do it for a reader.

Many think that a book makes friends for you, for there is an acquaintance between you and the man who reads the same book. Dr. Johnson, hearing that a man read Burton's *Analyses of Melancholy*, exclaimed, "If I knew that man, I could hug him." We expect a great man to be a great reader. There is a wonderful similarity between great men in their estimate of books. Caesar, when shipwrecked and in danger of drowning, did not try to save his gold but he took his Commissaries between his teeth and swam for the shore. The Duke of Marlborough would not encamp without a copy of Shakespeare. The Duchess d'Abbrantes tells us that the first Napoléon book and paper out of his carriage while traveling, as fast as he read them, so that they would strew the road. We expect great men to be greater readers, for in proportion to the diffusing power should be the receiving power.

PRACTICAL VALUE OF EDUCATION.

A person educated in the common branches alone will usually earn twice the sum that an uneducated one will, and his prospects are good for advancement to the position of overseer or manager with a salary of many thousands, while the ignorant man has an such chance. A few years ago, a collection of one of the extravagance manufacturers, of Philadelphia, Mass., stated that only forty-five out of one thousand two hundred operatives in their

mill were unable to write their names, and that the wages of these were twenty-seven per cent. less than the wages of those who could write. In the same mills were one hundred and fifty girls who had been teachers. Their wages were seventeen and three quarters per cent. above the general average, and forty per cent. above those who made their mark. \* \* \* To women rapidly rising to her true position, to whom the avenues of trade, the professions and all kinds of employment are opening, this subject appeals with peculiar force. She would have a deep interest in any measure which will render her less dependent on husband, brother, or father, and which will enable her to obtain a generous support when other resources fail. She should seek to be in a condition to feel independent, and to be able with ease to earn a livelihood. A knowledge of some art will tend to give her a higher position and to secure for her higher rank. She should have knowledge of colors and relations, and her skill in drawing and painting is fitted to succeed in what she requires taste. The success of the lady pupils at South Kensington is greater than that of the male students, and that in the face of greater difficulties. The many branches of art-workmanship requiring delicate fingers and native readiness of taste can be better performed by woman than by man. In 1850 20,000 women were employed in watch-making in Switzerland. Our silk manufacturers employ 7,802 women in light, clean, remunerative work. A lady in Pittsburg receives \$250 per moa h for designs in embroidery, made wholly by herself. Woman can excel in drafting, architectural drawing, photography, engraving, modeling, designing and painting—Education in the arts, by opening to her new departments of labor, will enable her better to compete with men, secure her better compensation for her services, and will increase her usefulness and influence.

After Dinner.

He provoked me into loving him," was a Rochester girl's excuse for engaging herself to a man whom she had always professed to hate.

Heaven, according to the idea of a Vermonter, is 123,000,000 miles from the earth, and Bloobs stopped being at eight o'clock this morning. He says: "I too off."

French officers are not allowed to marry unless the bride has a fortune of not less than \$5,000. The limit was for the merely \$2,000, but the price has been raised.

That Boston youth was well informed in the ways of women who offered himself to a girl in this style: "Do you love me, and will you be my wife now, just tell me the truth about it?"

A person who said he was a clergyman presented himself at the office of a noted estate firm in Boston, and asked if they would give him a list of all the farms offered for sale and owned by widows. The real estate men asked what he wanted to buy, widow or marry a farm.

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